



Domestic Violence

Published with support from
the Massachusetts
Executive Office
of Public Safety

Fact Sheet

Domestic Violence in Massachusetts

Background

In response to an increase in the number of domestic violence related homicides, in 1992, then Governor Weld and Lieutenant Governor Cellucci declared a state of emergency in Massachusetts and created the Governor's Commission on Domestic Violence to advise, provide information, and make recommendations to the Governor regarding this issue. The membership of the Commission includes representatives from state and local government agencies, law enforcement, judiciary, service providers, and the private sector.

As one of the subcommittees of the Commission, the Research and Evaluation Subcommittee assists the Commission and other subcommittees in obtaining, interpreting and applying current research and evaluation information to program initiatives and policy development. The subcommittee also works to identify and suggest solutions to address gaps in our current knowledge of the dimensions of the domestic violence problem in Massachusetts. Toward that end, the subcommittee members have developed this fact sheet using Massachusetts' data sources.

The domestic violence facts presented in this document focus primarily on intimate partner relationships (e.g., a current or ex-spouse or live in partner, current or ex-boyfriend or girlfriend, or date). Facts that include other familial relationships, are specifically noted. Similarly, the Fact Sheet reflects the terminology used by the originating data source.

While this Fact Sheet uses a variety of data sources to present information on intimate partner violence, all sources have problems with underreporting. None of these data sources accurately capture the true and complete incidence of domestic violence occurring in the Commonwealth. There are many reasons why victims and survivors do not report a domestic violence experience - shame or embarrassment, fear of offender retaliation, effect on family or significant others, fear of not being believed, lack of confidence in criminal justice, health or social service systems, emotional trauma related to conveying details of the incident, fear of publicity, and language or cultural barriers all play a role in underreporting.

The following statistics describe cases of domestic violence in Massachusetts.

Homicides

- Between October 1, 1999 and September 30, 2000, 25 women and children (22 women and 3 children) were murdered as a result of domestic violence or intimate partner violence. This is a 67% increase from the previous year.
- Of the 22 women killed, 12 had children, and 6 had active restraining orders against their murderers.

Source: Jane Doe Inc., Massachusetts Coalition Against Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence (2000).
Note: Cases include both intimate partner and family violence, as defined by MGL C. 209A, §1.

Restraining Orders

- The JRS is the statewide emergency program for resolving emergency legal situations when court is closed. For the fifth consecutive year, the number of calls to the Judicial Response System (JRS) declined, with 6.3% fewer calls in FY00 than FY99.
- In FY00, the JRS received 9,119 requests for abuse prevention orders under c. 209A, which accounted for 91.1% of all calls to the JRS.

Source: Massachusetts Administrative Office of the Trial Court (2000). Judicial Response System, Fiscal Year 2000 Report. Boston, MA: Massachusetts Administrative Office of the Trial Court, Planning & Development Department.
Note: Cases include both intimate partner and family violence, as defined by MGL C. 209A, §1.

- The number of restraining orders filed in 2000 declined 4% from 1999 (from 36,085 to 34,742), and 29% from 1993 (49,248).
- For 2000, the Office of the Commissioner of Probation reports that 82% of defendants in 209A cases were male.

Source: Massachusetts Office of the Commissioner of Probation (2001). Massachusetts Probation Service, Registry of Civil Restraining Orders Summary. Boston, MA: Massachusetts Office of the Commissioner of Probation, Field Services Division, Research Department.
Note: Cases include both intimate partner and family violence, as defined by MGL C. 209A, §1.

- The Office of the Commissioner of Probation reports that from 1992 to 1998, 23.3% of offenders had two or more restraining orders issued against them by different victims, with some having as many as eight different victims.
- Nearly 91% of batterers identified by the Registry of Civil Restraining Orders as having multiple victims also had a prior criminal and/or delinquent arraignment.

Source: Adams, S. (1999). Serial Batterers. Probation Research Bulletin. Boston, MA: Massachusetts Office of the Commissioner of Probation.
Note: Cases include both intimate partner and family violence, as defined by MGL C. 209A, §1.

- 20% of women (aged 18 and older) surveyed in 1998 and 1999, who identified as having experienced intimate partner violence in the past year, obtained a restraining order.
- Of these women, 24% stated the restraining order was violated.

Source: Mucci, Lorelei (2000). [Analysis of intimate partner violence data contained in the MA Dept of Public Health’s 1998 & 1999 Massachusetts

Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey]. Unpublished raw data.
Limitation: Data based on self-disclosure and therefore may be an underestimate.
Note: Intimate partner violence defined as experiencing physical violence, fear, or control by intimate partner.

- According to preliminary data from 2000, 61% of clients in certified Batterers Intervention Programs had a restraining order against them some time before entering the program.
- Source: Rothman, Emily (2000). [Analysis of preliminary data for 2000 from the MA Dept. of Public Health’s Batterer Intervention Program]. Unpublished raw data.

- In 1999, when asked why a protective order (209A) was obtained, almost 30% of clients of court-based SAFEPLAN advocates reported having been physically harmed, and 71% stated they were fearful of being physically harmed.
- In the courts covered by SAFEPLAN advocates, on average, 70% of victims receiving initial protective orders returned to court to extend their orders.

Source: Massachusetts Office of Victim Assistance (2000). SAFEPLAN Massachusetts: A Report to the Legislature. Boston, MA: Author.

Victimization

- During 1998 and 1999, 5.5% of surveyed women ages 18-59 reported experiencing intimate partner violence in the past year.
- 39% of these women stated that their current intimate partner was responsible for the abuse

Source: Mucci, Lorelei (2000). [Analysis of intimate partner violence data from the MA Dept of Public Health’s 1998 & 1999 Massachusetts Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey]. Unpublished raw data.
Limitation: Data based on self-disclosure and therefore may be an underestimate.
Note: Intimate partner violence defined as experiencing physical violence, fear or control by intimate partner.

- According to Massachusetts data reported to the National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) in 1998, one in five aggravated assaults (22%) were committed by an intimate partner. Seventy-eight percent (78%) of the victims were female.
- Of all simple assaults reported by police to NIBRS, 4 out of 10 were committed by intimate partners.
- In 31% of kidnappings reported to the NIBRS, the victim and perpetrator were intimate partners. Eighty-eight percent (88%) of victims identified were female.

Source: Massachusetts State Police Crime Reporting Unit (1999). 1998 Data from the National Incident-Based Reporting System, [Online].
Limitations: Data represent approximately 1/3 of the state’s population. Victim/offender relationship was available for only 28% of the victims.

Weapon-related Injuries Due to Intimate Partner Violence in Massachusetts

- From 1994 to 1998 there were 1,341 female victims of violence-related weapon injuries reported by Emergency Departments.
- 21% of these injuries, where relationship was reported, were inflicted by an intimate partner.
- 93% of the intimate partner cases were injured by a sharp

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>instrument and 6.5% were injured by a firearm.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">71% of the weapon-related injuries caused by intimate partners occurred in the home. <p>Source: Cummins, Patrice (2000). [Analysis of 1994-1998 data from the MA Dept of Public Health's Massachusetts Weapon-Related Injury Surveillance System (WRISS)]. Unpublished raw data.</p> <p>Limitation: Relationship to the offender was available for only 68% of the cases.</p> <h3>Sexual Assaults within Intimate Partner Relationships</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none">19% of women surveyed in 1999 reported ever being sexually assaulted.22% of these women reported ever being sexually assaulted by an intimate partner. <p>Source: Mucci, Lorelei (2000). [Analysis of data from the MA Dept of Public Health's 1999 Massachusetts Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey]. Unpublished raw data.</p> <p>Limitation: Data are based on self-disclosure and therefore may be an underestimate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Sexual assaults against women by an intimate partner reported to rape crisis centers rose from 11% of all reports in 1988 to 20% in 1996.98% of survivors of intimate partner violence sexual assault were female and 99% of the assailants were male.97% of survivors and 92% of the assailants were between the ages of 13 and 45 at the time of the latest sexual assault. <p>Source: MA Department of Public Health (1999). Sexual Assault in Massachusetts 1988-1997: Findings from Publicly-Funded Rape Crisis Centers and the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System. Boston, MA: Author.</p> <p>Limitation: Data are based on self-reported information to rape crisis centers and therefore may be an underestimate.</p> <h3>Underserved Populations</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none">According to data from the Violence Recovery Programs at Fenway Community Health and The Network: Ending Abuse in Lesbian, Bisexual Women's, and Transgender Communities (The Network), reports of same-sex intimate partner violence increased 50% from 193 in 1998 to 289 in 1999. This rise can be partially attributed to an increase in outreach and education. <p>Source: National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs (2000). Lesbian, Gay, Transgender and Bisexual Domestic Violence in 1999: A Report of the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs. New York, NY: Author.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">According to The Network, in 1999, 28% of women served, where race was known, were identified as non-white. <p>Source: The Network: Ending Abuse in Lesbian, Bisexual Women's, and Transgender Communities (2000). 1999 Hotline Statistics.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">According to a community survey of 607 Asian men and women conducted in 1999, 38% of respondents say they know a woman who has been shoved, pushed, slapped, kicked, or suffered other injuries from her partner.Specifically, 24% of Chinese respondents, 32% of Korean respondents, 39% of Vietnamese respondents, 47% of Cambodian respondents, and 44% of South Asian | <p>respondents say they know a woman who has been shoved, pushed, slapped, kicked, or suffered other injuries from her partner.</p> <p>Source: Yoshioka, M., Dang, Q., Shewmangal, N. , Chan, C., Imm Tan, C. (2000). Asian Family Violence Report. A Study of the Chinese, Cambodian, Korean, South Asian and Vietnamese Communities in Massachusetts. Boston, MA: Asian Task Force Against Domestic Violence, Inc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Over one quarter (26%) of female recipients of Transitional Aid to Families with Dependents Children (TAFDC) report being physically, sexually, or emotionally abused by an intimate partner in the last year.70% of female TAFDC recipients reported being physically, sexually, or emotionally abused by an intimate partner in their lifetime. <p>Source: Allard, M., Albelda, R., Colten, M., & Cosenza, C. (1997). In Harm's Way? Domestic Violence, AFDC Receipt, and Welfare Reform in Massachusetts. Boston, MA: University of Massachusetts Boston.</p> <h3>Child Witness to Violence</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none">According to the Registry of Civil Restraining Orders, an estimated 43,000 children a year are exposed to reported acts of abuse and violence between family members. <p>Source: Adams, Sandra (1995). The Tragedies of Domestic Violence: A qualitative analysis of civil restraining orders in Massachusetts. Boston, MA: Office of the Commissioner of Probation.</p> <p>Note: Cases include both intimate partner and family violence, as defined by MGL C. 209A, §1.</p> <h3>Teen Dating Violence</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none">In 1999, 18% of females surveyed in grades 9 through 12 reported being hurt physically or sexually by a date: 8.9% reported being hurt physically, 3.8% reported being hurt sexually, and 5.3% reported being hurt both physically and sexually.21% of female high school students in 12th grade reported being hurt physically or sexually by a date.Being hurt by a date was associated with one or more of the following: smoking, drinking, drug use, vomiting or using laxatives or diet pills to control weight, experiencing unprotected sex, and suicidal ideation or attempts. <p>Source: Pratt, Carter (2000). [Analysis of Massachusetts Department of Education's 1999 Massachusetts Youth Risk Behavior Survey]. Unpublished raw data.</p> <h3>Service Delivery</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none">In Fiscal Year 2000, 33,511 women and children received Department of Social Services (DSS) -funded community-based domestic violence services, including legal advocacy and support groups.DSS-funded battered women's programs received 47,817 hotline calls.1,769 women and children received shelter/safe home services.4,117 women and children were turned away from shelters and safe homes due to lack of resources. <p>Source: Jane Doe Inc., Massachusetts Coalition Against Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence. FY2000 Summary of Massachusetts Domestic Violence Statistics.</p> |
|---|--|

- According to the Massachusetts Office for Victim Assistance, court-based SAFEPLAN advocates in 6 counties assisted 5,752 victims over 13,700 times, during calendar year 1999.
- In 1999, 92% of clients received safety planning, 65% were accompanied at their court hearing, and 95% were provided referrals to a variety of different services including district attorney's offices, local battered women's programs, legal services, and rape crisis centers.

Source: Massachusetts Office of Victim Assistance (2000). *SAFEPLAN Massachusetts: A Report to the Legislature*. Boston, MA: Author.

- In Fiscal Year 1999, the Battered Women Legal Assistance Program (BWLAP) served 4,358 women and children with a full range of legal services.

Source: Battered Women Legal Assistance Program (2000). *BWLAP FY99 Performance: Case Statistics and Number of Women and Children Served*.

- Certified Batterers Intervention Programs in Massachusetts serve over 2,000 men per year.
- According to preliminary data from 2000, 54% of clients in certified Batterers Intervention Programs have children.
- 40% of clients in certified Batterers Intervention Programs live with their victim.
- 85% of referrals to certified Batterers Intervention Programs are from district courts.
- 5% of clients in certified Batterers Intervention Programs are there voluntarily.
- 60% of clients in certified Batterers Intervention Programs are between the ages of 21 and 35, and only 8% of clients are age 46 or older.
- 60% of clients in certified Batterers Intervention Programs are white, 16% are Black/Non-Hispanic, 18% are Hispanic, and 1.4% are Asian.

Source: Rothman, Emily (2000). [Analysis of preliminary 2000 data from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health's Batterer Intervention Program]. Unpublished raw data.

Additional Information

The following reports contain additional information regarding the data sources contained in this report:

Adams, S. (1999). *Serial Batterers*. Probation Research Bulletin. Boston, MA: Massachusetts Office of the Commissioner of Probation.

Allard, M., Albelda, R., Colten, M., & Cosenza, C. (1997). *In Harm's Way? Domestic Violence, AFDC Receipt, and Welfare Reform in Massachusetts*. Boston, MA: University of Massachusetts Boston.

Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Governor's Commission on Domestic Violence, Research and Evaluation Subcommittee (2000). *Summaries of Statewide Data Sources Relevant to Intimate Partner Violence*. Boston, MA: Executive Office of Public Safety.

Hathaway, J. (2000). *Intimate Partner Violence in Massachusetts: Data Sources and Statistics Through 1996*. Boston, MA: Massachusetts Department of Public Health.

Massachusetts Administrative Office of the Trial Court (2000). *Judicial Response System, Fiscal Year 2000 Report*. Boston, MA: Massachusetts Administrative Office of the Trial Court, Planning & Development Department.

Massachusetts Department of Education (2000). *1999 Massachusetts Youth Risk Behavior Survey Results*. Malden, MA: Author.

Massachusetts Department of Public Health (1999). *Sexual Assault in Massachusetts 1988-1997: Findings from Publicly-Funded Rape Crisis Centers and the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System*. Boston, MA: Author.

Massachusetts Department of Public Health (2000). *A Profile of Health Among Massachusetts Adults, 1998: Results from the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System*. Boston, MA: Author.

Massachusetts Office of the Commissioner of Probation (2000). *Massachusetts Probation Service, Registry of Civil Restraining Orders Summary*. Boston, MA: Massachusetts Office of the Commissioner of Probation, Field Services Division, Research Department.

Massachusetts Office of Victim Assistance (2000). *SAFEPLAN Massachusetts: A Report to the Legislature*. Boston, MA: Author.

Yoshioka, M., Dang, Q., Shewmangal, N. , Chan, C., Imm Tan, C. (2000). *Asian Family Violence Report. A Study of the Chinese, Cambodian, Korean, South Asian and Vietnamese Communities in Massachusetts*. Boston, MA: Asian Task Force Against Domestic Violence, Inc.

Current Membership of Research & Evaluation Subcommittee by Organization

- Abt Associates Inc.
- Boston Public Health Commission
- Boston University Schools of Public Health and Medicine
- Harvard School of Public Health
- Higher Education Center for Alcohol and Other Drug Prevention
- Jane Doe Inc., Massachusetts Coalition Against Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence
- Massachusetts Administrative Office of the Trial Court
- Massachusetts Department of Public Health
- Massachusetts Executive Office of Health and Human Services
- Massachusetts Executive Office of Public Safety
- Massachusetts Office of the Commissioner of Probation
- Massachusetts State Police
- Simmons College School of Social Work

For more information regarding this Fact Sheet or the Research and Evaluation Subcommittee, please call: Diana Brensilber at (617) 727-6300, ext. 25325 or Carter Pratt at (617) 624-5401

Additional copies of this Fact Sheet can be downloaded in PDF from <http://www.state.ma.us/ccj>.